

dc
671
C333
Birds



CBC Newsletter

ISSN No. 0162-7120

For members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

Volume 54

February 2008

Number 1



Winter Finches Invade the Carolinas!

Steve Shultz



The mosquitoes are still buzzing in constellations around intrepid hikers enjoying a mid-September day in the north woods. Moose begin to show the full extent of their glorious racks while Swainson's Thrushes finish showing young of the year the ins and outs of catching a buggy dinner. Red-breasted Nuthatches begin abandoning northern strongholds and pour south in droves.

Like a game of "which one of these things does not match the others" from *Sesame Street*, one might think that nuthatches flying south would not be a late summer/early fall phenomenon, but in 2007 this movement was among the first clues that the winter of 2007-2008 might be what is known as a "finch year". True, nuthatches are not finches, but they rely on many of the same food sources, and as birders throughout the Carolinas and adjoining states began reporting large numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches in September and October, excitement began to build that this might be a year to see northern winter finches at backyard feeders and woodlots in the Carolinas.

By October, Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were widely reported in the Carolinas, small numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were being seen, and one of the most northern of all finches, the Common Redpoll, made sporadic appearances from the Piedmont to the coast.

unpredictable cycle where northern finches all but abandon territories in the boreal forests of Canada and the United States and spend the winter in the balmy south. While this seems like a perfectly reasonable idea, after all thousands of "snowbird" retirees do pretty much the same thing, predicting when and if these birds will fly south for the winter can be difficult.

The various species of "winter finches" include Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Evening Grosbeak, Common and Hoary Redpoll, Red and White-winged Crossbills, and Pine Grosbeaks. During most years one or two species will move south in numbers, a phenomenon known as an "irruption". This usually occurs when the food source, usually one type of cone or seed, is less abundant than normal. Many tree species go through cycles of poor seed/cone production followed by high seed/cone production. Simply put, during periods of low production, species that rely on that food source may leave to look for better forage elsewhere. In most years only a few species of trees are at the low point of their production cycle, and consequently one or two species of birds may irrupt south. When the nadirs of several species coincide, birders enjoy seeing a variety of northern species in areas where they may have been rare or uncommon in previous winters. 2007-2008 may be one of those winters where several species irrupt south at once.

Yes, the winter of 2007-2008 appears to be one in an

(continued on page 2)

CBC Newsletter (USPS# 023-534), February 2008, Volume 54, Number 1. Published bimonthly by Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 353 Montabello, Bloomingdale, IL 60108-1037. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CBC Newsletter, Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 6325 Falls of the Neuse Road, STE 9 PMB 150, Raleigh, NC 27615

Winter Finches (continued)



What might you see at your feeder or on a winter bird walk this year? The following lists some of the species known to wander south in the winter, and how to potentially attract them to your backyard.

Purple Finch: PUFI's, as the bird banders call them, are fairly common winter visitors most years. Most often found at sunflower seed dispensers, Purple Finches feed on a variety of seeds and tree buds and commonly join mixed flocks of resident and wintering passerines. Purple Finches may initially go unnoticed among larger numbers of House Finches, but once you get used to the raspberry coloring of the male and the bolder striping on the females, you'll easily be able to pick out the odd Purple Finch. Purple Finches leave their breeding areas and move south each year, but numbers of birds seen in the Carolinas varies from "not many" to "wow, where did all of the Purple Finches come from!"

Pine Siskin: Siskins often feed with flocks of wintering American Goldfinches, and are especially fond of the small, black seeds known alternatively as "thistle", "niger", or "nyger". One of the more expensive seeds to purchase, a bag of thistle has the benefit of not being very attractive to squirrels and feeder hogs such as grackles and House Sparrows, so at least it lasts a little longer! Pine Siskins, when present, are usually easy to locate by ear. Their buzzy calls are given frequently in flight, and the yellow flash in the wings is most often evident as the birds alight on or fly from feeders.

Evening Grosbeak: The "Evebeak" used to be a more regular winter visitor to the Carolinas than in recent years. Breeders in the eastern Canada population decreased as spruce bud worm outbreaks became more infrequent. The sight of a flock of elegantly colored grosbeaks on a gray winter day will warm the heart of most any birder, at least until they realize how much sunflower seed the birds can go through. Hold on to your wallet! When not raiding feeders, Evening Grosbeaks enjoy buds and seeds of ash, tupelo, and other trees.

Common Redpoll: The redpoll is a dashing finch with a jaunty red "cap" perched atop its head. Redpolls often occur in flocks farther north, but in the Carolinas where the species are rare, single birds are more expected. Redpolls may visit thistle feeders and occasionally take millet as well. Redpolls are fond of weedy fields and overgrown thickets, and time spent searching through flocks of goldfinches feeding in these areas may be rewarding during years when redpolls are known to be in the area. The Common Redpoll has an even more-northern cousin, the Hoary Redpoll. This species can be very difficult to separate from lightly marked Common Redpolls, and is generally not expected in the Carolinas. However, if you have a particularly white-looking redpoll frequenting your feeder, it might be worth letting someone know!

Red Crossbill: Found as an uncommon and irregular breeder in the mountains of North Carolina, and at least potentially in the Blue Ridge of South Carolina, "local" crossbills may be joined by northern relatives during exceptional finch years. More likely to be found in stands of pines than at feeders, crossbills are nonetheless attracted at times to backyard feeding stations. Red Crossbills are by far the more likely to be found in the Carolinas, but White-winged Crossbills have been reported on very rare occasions, and several winters ago a pair spent several months in suburban Portsmouth, VA, so you never know when one or two might appear.

Pine Grosbeak: Virtually non-existent in the Carolinas, an exceptional finch flight year might produce one or two of these exciting birds for the very lucky birder. If you see one, call somebody fast!

By the time this Newsletter reaches you, winter finches may be covering your feeders, or the build up might be for nothing as the expected flocks of northern birds fail to materialize. In either case, it's always fun to keep an eye on the feeding station during the winter. Who knows what might show up!

Winter Bird Feeding

Donald Rote

My attempts to feed winter birds started innocently but soon expanded to a near obsession! I started long ago with one hopper-style feeder and now have eight different feeders around the yard. When I was a beginning birder, I was fascinated by just the sight of birds. Providing a winter feeding station brought birds in for a closer view and kept them in the neighborhood all winter. I was thrilled when cardinals started visiting, soon to be followed by chickadees and titmice. As more and different kinds of birds started visiting my feeder, my brain started to reason that if one feeder was good, two would be better! I filled one feeder with mixed seed and the other with black oil sunflower seed. Now the birds were coming in fast and furious, and I had had to adapt if I wanted to accommodate them. When the sparrows, juncos and doves showed up, I started sprinkling chicken scratch on the driveway for them. Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers on the sunflower feeder prompted me to hang two suet holders. When the White-breasted and Brown-headed Nuthatches appeared, I made a peanut butter holder by drilling several half-inch holes into a dead branch and then filling them with peanut butter. Goldfinches love the thistle-tube feeder I put out for them. When I saw a winter hummingbird at my neighbor's *Camellia* bushes, I put out my hummingbird feeder again and got good views of a female Rufous Hummingbird.

New this year is a tube feeder filled with sunflower nuts that I hope will attract and keep Purple Finches and Pine Siskins. Next year I plan to build and put out a platform feeder filled with dried fruits and mealworms for the bluebirds and stray orioles.

After twenty years of bird feeding adventures and misadventures I have made several observations:

1. A variety of feeders filled with a variety of preferred foods is the key to attracting a wider variety of species.
2. Don't bother with the cheap, supermarket bird seed unless you plan to spread it on the ground for the House Sparrows!
3. Spreading seed on the ground/driveway will tend to keep the House Sparrows away from your other feeders.
4. A premium mix of bird seed is still deficient in black oil sunflower seeds. I supplement the mix I use by adding more sunflower seeds to it.
5. Birds are not too picky when it comes to suet. The cheap, plain suet is just as attractive to the birds as the more expensive fruit and nut filled suets.
6. Squirrels can be a problem. I know that is an understatement!! After years of chasing them and trapping them in box traps, I have given up and put out ears of corn on the far side of the yard in an attempt to keep them away from the feeders.
7. When Cooper's, Sharp-shinned and other hawks show up, I don't bother them. After all, I'm feeding birds! I have found that the House Sparrows seem to disappear after a hawk starts hanging around the neighborhood. I don't mind the hawks, but the neighbor's cat has got to go!!
8. Premium bird seed is not cheap, but the results are well worth the extra cost. I just hope that my wife never finds out exactly how much I am spending on birds!

New Members	Donald & Mary Baker Southern Pines, NC	Valerie Crabill Spruce Pine, NC	Susan Robbins Morehead City, NC	Shawn Smolen- Morton Florence, SC
Dr. Herb & Pat Amyx Wake Forest, NC	Richard Barmore & Elizabeth White Arapahoe, NC	Brock Hutchins Peachtree City, GA	Richard & Dorothy Rosche East Aurora, NY	Nathan Swick Chapel Hill, NC
Todd Arcos Hendersonville, NC	David Bateman Bluffton, SC	Bill & Deirdre Newton Southern Pines, NC	Rita Blake Russ Wilmington, NC	Audrey Whitlock Nags Head, NC
Richard Atkins Chapel Hill, NC	Duane Chuck Car- mack Wilmington, NC	Ed Peachey Flat Rock., NC	Shelley Rutkin Winston-Salem, NC	<i>Deceased Member</i> Corinne Pettit

Peregrine Falcon Nesting Results for North Carolina - 2007

Christine Kelly

Here are the results of the 2007 nesting season for Peregrine Falcons in North Carolina. Thirteen pairs produced thirteen fledglings. Territory occupancy was 100% at known sites. Nest success was 53% and productivity was 1.00 nestling per pair. Results are unknown for two sites.

Number of nestlings at least one month of age observed per site:

Whiteside Mtn	(Jackson County)	2
White Rock Cliff	(Madison Co.)	1
Big Lost Cove	(Avery Co.)	0
Table Rock	(Burke Co.)	0
Panthertail Mtn	(Transylvania Co.)	2
Chimney Rock	(Rutherford Co.)	0
Devil's Courthouse	(Transylvania Co.)	2

Shortoff Mtn (Burke Co.) Unknown. Access to observation site was prohibited due to consecutive wildfires in Linville Gorge.

Looking Glass Rock (Transylvania Co.) 0
First case of nest failure since 1999. Suspect this is a new tiercel.

Buzzard's Roost (Haywood Co.) 4
This is a high number of chicks for Peregrine Falcons nesting in western North Carolina.

Dunn's Rock (Transylvania Co.) 2
(likely perished before fledging)

Grandfather Mtn (Avery Co.) 0

A second year Peregrine Falcon was persistently harassing the resident pair at Grandfather.

Hanging Rock State Park (Stokes Co.) Unknown, but nestlings were heard by observers.

Each year I attempt to survey a handful of other cliffs that have potential nest ledges. As a result of this effort one "new" (to my knowledge) nesting pair was located in Transylvania County this year. **VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED** for the 2008 season! If you live in or frequent the mountain region of North Carolina and have access to a spotting scope and tripod, please consider adopting one of the nest sites listed above or assisting with monitoring at a nest sites. Nesting commences in late February/early March and wraps up toward the end of June. You can go as often as you like. I can provide training materials for identifying a Peregrine Falcon and its nesting behaviors. I also could use help checking other potential nest sites, for example, around Mt. Mitchell, The Peak, Bluff Mtn, cliffs on the Nantahala National Forest, etc. Contact me if you are interested! If you see a Peregrine Falcon in **WESTERN** North Carolina **DURING THE NESTING SEASON** (between March and June), please contact me as well. Thank you!

Christine Kelly
Mountain Wildlife Diversity Biologist
NC Wildlife Resources Commission
46 First Street
Asheville, NC 28803
(828) 230-1320



NC Birding Trail Update!

Coast – Trail guides for personal use may be purchased through the NC Birding Trail website link to the Wildlife Resources Commission Wild Store: ncbirdingtrail.org. We have recently partnered with UNC Press to distribute the guides to retail outlets so watch for guides on local bookstore shelves in the near future.

Piedmont – The Piedmont Guide is in the design process with an anticipated release date of May 2008.

Mountain – Mountain site nominations are open until April 1, 2008. Site managers from areas west of I-77 are currently working on site nominations. If you have a favorite birding location, be sure to contact the site manager to ensure they are nominating the site for the Trail. This Guide will be published Spring 2009.

The Backyard and Beyond

Steve Compton

This is the first of a series of columns that should appeal to both the expert and the beginning bird watcher.

Like most of us, my bird watching began in my family's backyard, the environment where most of us watch birds on a daily basis. The majority of bird watchers do most, if not all, of their birding in the yard. Only a few, including most Carolina Bird Club members, ever go on field trips or venture into parks, forests, and so forth, alone.

My father, Fred Compton, was a typical backyard birder. My first birding memory is his excitement at pointing out a Scarlet Tanager on one of our long summer vacation drives, probably from Greenville, SC to upstate New York. When we moved to the Tanglewood community in 1967, he installed bird feeders that remain there today. A heavily wooded neighborhood on the west side of Greenville, that yard has attracted a nice variety of migrants and winter feeder birds over the years. My mom's friend John Cooper has diligently maintained the feeders since my dad died in 1978. If you are looking for a house, or plan to build, this yard has many of the elements for good backyard birding: it has a small creek on its rear boundary, short-needle pines and hardwoods, and a few ornamentals providing good cover near the feeders. Most of the time the feeders are filled with black oil sunflower seed. Birders have favorite seed mixtures, but black oil sunflower has always worked well for me. I do think Nathan Dias's advice on white (or is it red?) proso millet should be considered. I plan to experiment with millet this winter. A winter feeder with the more expensive nyger seed is a good addition--the Gold and Purple Finches strongly favor nyger seed. The only Common Redpoll I have ever seen in the U.S. was in Nathan's backyard in Charleston, SC at a nyger seed feeder.

A brief mention of hummingbirds: the hottest backyard birds around are often the hummers, and the best ones are seen in the Carolinas and the Southeast generally. As I write, on Halloween, a Green-breasted Mango is causing a stir in Georgia, and a Buff-bellied Hummingbird, North Carolina's first, I believe, was seen briefly near New Bern.

Wow! These hummers are almost always discovered by average backyard birders, not experts, rarely listers, just regular folks who have kept their feeders up past the summer season. It points out most strongly that the average birder can make an important contribution.



Beyond the backyard, consider "hunter" orange clothing for safety. Too often I have seen birders working on a roadside with little awareness of passing traffic. This seems especially common on Christmas counts, when prescribed areas must be covered. An orange cap and vest might not be a cool fashion statement, but won't scare away the birds. It might save your life. Orange clothing is especially needed if you are birding in an area with hunters present. This is sometimes the case on Christmas counts, when deer season is wrapping up. I bought a cap the other day for \$2.50.

Even further beyond the backyard, I'm planning a dream road trip this summer. I have a six-week break in the practice schedule of the Greenville Chorale, and plan to drive the Jeep Wrangler to Seattle via the Midwest, then I-90 through South Dakota and Montana. I will return via the legendary Pacific Coast Highway (US 101), then hang a left at San Diego and proceed across Arizona, New Mexico, and to South Texas, if there's time. Probably crazy, but I'll visit several new states and might pick up 100 life birds (who knows how many?). Any advice on route or strategy is welcome..

Next time I'll focus more on birding techniques (borrowing liberally from postings on Carolinabirds and American Birding Association publications). Please send feedback, questions, and ideas to me at scompton1251@charter.net.

Did you Know?

The Northern Pintail has been selected to adorn the 2008-2009 Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, also known as the "Duck Stamp".

NC Partners in Flight 2008 Spring Meeting Announced

Mark Johns

North Carolina Partners in Flight announces its 2008 spring meeting March 27, 2008 from 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. at Blue Jay Point County Park, Wake County, North Carolina.

Tentative Meeting Agenda

Corporate CURE Area Update - Benjy Strobe (Corporate CURE Technical Assistance Biologist, NC Wildlife Resources Commission) discusses highlights of the Murphy-Brown NC Wildlife Resources Commission CURE area in Ammon, NC.

Effects of Perimeter-area Ratio and Landscape Context on Scrub-successional Birds in Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Habitat - Corey Shake (Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences Program, NC State University) presents a summary of results from the first year of data on this two-year study that examines how size, shape, and landscape context affect scrub-successional birds. The study focuses on how these factors influence two bird response variables: (1) whether or not a species occupies a CREP habitat patch and (2) nest success rates of five focal songbird species within a patch. The study aims to help the NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation create riparian buffers that provide benefits for declining bird species.

An Update on the NC Birding Trail – Salinda Daley Bachelor (NC Birding Trail Coordinator, NC Wildlife Resources Commission). Learn about the latest development from the NC Birding Trail, a driving trail connecting great birding spots across the state. Topics will include a progress update, information on our Birder Friendly Business/Community training program, and future direction related to signs, the trail guide series, educational goals, and marketing.

Breeding Painted Bunting Citizen Science and Traditional Monitoring Surveys - 2007 – Jamie Rotenberg, (Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Studies, UNC- Wilmington). UNCW, the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, US Fish and Wildlife Service and other participating partners, including Citizen Science volunteers, conducted monitoring of populations of North

Carolina's breeding Painted Buntings. Results from both the 2007 Citizen Science-collected data and the traditional monitoring will be presented along with an update on trends, and distribution.

Over-wintering Waterfowl Movements in Coastal North Carolina - Michael J. Begier, (Wildlife Biologist, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services). North Carolina, including the northeastern coastal plain, is a known over-wintering site for many species of waterfowl. The counties surrounding Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge provide habitat for several of these species. From a study site location in Washington County we were able to observe arrival and departure migration patterns and daily movements between foraging and roosting locations of several species of birds. We utilized a 50 KW Furuno® radar equipped with a microcomputer and advanced tracking software from Sicom Systems, Ltd. to continuously monitor bird movements.

NC PIF Updates

Topics include:

- Swainson's Warbler Roanoke River Research
- Breeding Bird Survey Assessment Research
- Mecklenburg County Avian Monitoring/Research
- Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture
- Bald Eagle Monitoring
- Peregrine Falcon Monitoring
- Important Bird Areas
- Wind Energy
- WRC Game Land/CURE Bird Monitoring
- Nightjar Surveys
- Land Acquisition
- Forest Landbird Legacy Program
- Atmospheric Pollution and High Elevation Birds
- Upcoming NC PIF meetings

Note that lunch will be on your own. The Society of American Foresters have approved this meeting for 4.0 CFE Contact hours, Category 1.

For more information, contact Mark Johns at johnsme@mindspring.com. Hope to see you there!

CBC Bonus Trips: A Chance to Bird With Old Friends and Make New Ones in Fun Places Around the Carolinas and Beyond!

The CBC is pleased to announce the first of several bonus in-state field trips for 2008. Information on the two out-of-state trips announced in the previous edition of the Newsletter are also listed. As always, contact the trip leaders for more information and to reserve your place on the trip. These offerings fill up fast, so act soon to avoid disappointment!

Brunswick County Woodpeckers - April 5-6, 2008: Brunswick County, NC is for woodpeckers! In addition to having several colonies of the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker in Boiling Spring Lakes, the area is great for finding North Carolina's other six resident woodpeckers, plus it serves as winter home for the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. In early April we expect much breeding activity to be evident! The trip will include several Brunswick County NC Birding Trail sites such as Brunswick Town and Southport. Woodpeckers will be prime target birds; however, we should get a great assortment of migrants, area specialties, and overwintering birds. Be prepared for an early morning on Sunday as Red-cockaded Woodpeckers are early risers! Dates: Saturday, April 5, 2008 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, April 6, from 6 a.m. to noon. Hotel information and field trip departure sites to be determined. Cost: \$20. Please note that trip participants will be responsible for their lodging Saturday night. Personal vehicles will be used each day, and carpooling is encouraged. Contact John Ennis at johnxennis@bellsouth.net or by phone at (910) 371-9729 for more details or Dana Harris at hq@carolinabirdclub.org to establish your slot on the trip. See the registration form on page 10.

Florida: Join us from **February 15-23, 2008** as we caravan our way around Florida to great birding hotspots! This "Florida in Winter" trip will start and end in Ormond Beach, Florida, visiting Atlantic Coast, central, and Gulf Coast sites. Participants will provide their own lodging, meals, and transportation (no RV's please). CBC leaders will man the "lead car" and provide navigation and logistical services, and help with bird identification. We plan to carpool to some locations from nightly lodging areas. The objective of the trip is to enjoy Florida and see a lot of great birds! We plan to visit Tomoka State Park, Merritt Island NWR, JN "Ding" Darling NWR, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and Ft. DeSoto, as well as less visited spots such as Viera Wetlands, Lake Kissimmee, Shark Valley (Everglades National Park) and Orlando Wetlands. Cost is expected to be around \$100 per participant. The leaders are Pru Williams and Meret Wilson (Florida resident and bird bander). The trip is limited to 12 participants. For more information or to sign up, contact Pru Williams at (910) 321-0308.

California: Join trip leaders Linda Kolb and Bruce Smithson **March 1-9, 2008** as we search for California endemics and more. Our trip begins in Los Angeles and concludes in San Diego by way of Santa Cruz Island, the Laguna Mountains, the Anza-Borrego Desert, and the Salton Sea. Target birds include: Expect to see: Black-vented Shearwaters, Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants, White-faced Ibis, White-tailed Kite, Gambel's and California Quail, Black Oystercatcher, Black Turnstone, Surfbird, Heermann's, California, Western, and (hopefully) Yellow-footed Gulls, Spotted Dove, Greater Roadrunner, White-throated Swift, Allen's and Anna's Hummingbirds, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Black and Say's Phoebe, Cassin's Kingbird, Island and Western Scrub Jays, Oak Titmouse, California Gnatcatcher, Wrentit, California Thrasher, California and Abert's Towhee, Rufous-crowned, Phainopepla and more. Attendance is limited to 10 participants plus the leaders. Cost for 8 nights lodging, ground transportation, Santa Cruz boat trip, and two leaders is \$950 with a \$250 single supplement. We will have a cooler with drinks and snacks, but the cost of meals is not included. The cost of transportation to Los Angeles and from San Diego is not included. Contact Bruce Smithson at Brucesmithson@netscape.net or (910) 799-5083 for trip questions. Contact Dana Harris at hq@carolinabirdclub.org to establish your slot on the trip

CBC Bonus Trips (continued)

Maine- Puffins, boreal birds and spectacular scenery!

Join CBC member and globetrotting birding guide Simon Thompson from **July 11-19, 2008** on this very special Ventures, Inc. trip designed especially for the CBC. Maine is wonderful to visit in the summer for its cool climate and fine scenery, and has long been a popular vacation destination. It also happens to be an outstanding birding destination, offering a variety of habitats, which offer quite different birding opportunities from one another. Our venture will begin in Portland, where we will explore the waders and water birds of Scarborough Marsh. From there we go to Maine's fabled coast, where we will visit Acadia National Park and then head "down east" to investigate some specialized habitats -- the boreal forest and blueberry barrens of easternmost Maine. We will visit Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, several state parks, Campobello Island (site of one of the Roosevelt family's summer homes), Great Wass Island (a Nature Conservancy preserve), and other "down east" sites. One of the highlights of our trip will undoubtedly be our boat ride to Machias Seal Island, site of breeding Atlantic Puffin and Arctic Tern colonies, where we will be able to spend time ashore getting close-up looks and photographs of these two species. We will also take a boat ride out of Bar Harbor to look for Atlantic Puffin and Roseate Tern on Petit Manan Island and then to look for pelagic birds and whales a bit further out in the Gulf of Maine. Target species include: Spruce Grouse, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Three-toed & Black-backed Woodpeckers, Boreal Chickadee, Gray Jay, Atlantic Puffin, Black Guillemot, Razorbill, Arctic & Roseate Terns, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Manx Shearwater, Black-legged Kittiwake, Common Loon, Common Eider, Magnolia, Bay-breasted & Blackpoll Warblers, Saltmarsh & Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows.

The cost of the Maine Venture is \$1975 *from Portland* based on double occupancy (Single supplement \$325). **Price includes:** Van transportation from Portland, accommodation, meals, boat trips, admission fees, information packet & bird checklist, and guide/leader service, plus a \$50 donation to the CBC. **Not included:** Airfare to Portland, alcoholic beverages, and items of a personal nature. Reservations and prepayment are required on all Ventures. Your place on this Venture will be reserved when your deposit of \$200 has been received. Please make your check payable to VENTURES, Inc. and send it to the address below. Limited to **10** participants. For more information, or to reserve your spot on this Ventures, Inc. trip, contact Simon Thompson at: Ventures, PO Box 1095, Skyland NC 28776. The phone is 828-253-IBIS (4247). E-mail: travel@birdventures.com

2008 CBC Calendar of Events

Mark your calendars and don't miss these great events for 2008!

February 1-3 – Georgetown Winter Meeting –
Georgetown, SC

February 15-23 – The "Florida in Winter" caravan
trip will start and end in Ormond Beach, Florida, visiting Atlantic Coast, central, and Gulf Coast sites. See details on page 7.

March 1-9 – Join trip leaders Linda Kolb and Bruce Smithson to search for **Southern California** endemics and more. The trip begins in Los Angeles and con-

cludes in San Diego by way of Santa Cruz Island, the Laguna Mountains, the Anza-Borrego Desert, and the Salton Sea. See details on page 7.

April 5-6 – Brunswick County, NC is for woodpeckers! In addition to having several colonies of the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker in Boiling Spring Lakes, the area is great for finding North Carolina's resident woodpeckers and more. See details on page 7.

April 27 – A day trip to **Dobbins Farm, Townville, SC** is planned, stay tuned for details!

(continued on page 9)

Spring in the Carolina Sandhills

Susan Campbell

The Carolina Bird Club will be returning to Southern Pines, NC for the 2008 spring meeting May 2-4. The Sandhills is quite a diverse place with lots to do in addition to birdwatching. We will have plenty of material about the area at registration. You will find everything from golf (of course!), to equestrian events, antiques, potteries, horticultural gardens, 'pick your own' strawberry patches and more. So bring the whole family!

This year the host of the event will be the Sandhills Natural History Society (SNHS). The Moore County Bird Club grew to become SNHS in 2005. SNHS members are busy organizing just about every aspect of the weekend. They will assist with registration, events, field trips and even act as speakers. Also, plans are well underway for a special meeting t-shirt that will be created by Hal Broadfoot, who produced a fantastic design our weekend here in 2001.

Spring will be well under way by the time the meeting takes place. Resident species such as Brown-headed Nuthatches, Eastern Bluebirds and Chipping Sparrows will already be on eggs. Most of the migrants such as Chuck-will's-widows, Kentucky Warblers, and Grasshopper Sparrows will have returned and be establishing territories. Red-cockaded Woodpeckers will no doubt be active around their cavity trees, feeding young of the year. Given that recovery efforts on behalf of this endangered species have been so successful, it is unlikely anyone will walk away from the weekend without seeing at least one family group!

Field trips will feature some of the most popular destinations like Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve and the Sandhills Game Land but we will also

making forays to Hobby Field (home to a pair of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers for the past three summers) and Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge as well as Nature Conservancy's Long Valley Farm and the privately owned Raft Swamp Farm.

Our Friday evening speaker will be Jeff Marcus who is a biologist with the NC Wildlife Commission. Jeff will present a summary of the research and conservation initiatives underway on the Sandhills Game Land. He also discuss restoration efforts that have been so successful on state lands in the region.

Saturday evening, buffet dinner will be followed by our Annual Meeting and then a program by biologist and internationally renowned local photographer, Todd Pusser. Members may know Todd's work from his regular contributions to the *NC Wildlife* magazine. He has an extensive background in natural history of our area. Todd will show a variety of wildlife images taken here in the Sandhills.

Meeting headquarters will be at the Days Inn (web site: www.daysinn.com email: daysinnsp@earthlink.net). This is the same hotel we used seven years ago but it is now under new ownership (was Holiday Inn) and has been thoroughly renovated. The new accommodations and meal offerings are simply superb! The hotel is located in Southern Pines on US Highway 1 (south) at Morganton Road. Rooms are \$64 per night plus 9.75% tax. Reservations should be made by calling (800) 262-5737 before April 7th. Reservations made after the cut-off date cannot be guaranteed at this same low rate.

Hope to see many of you in the Sandhills in May!

2008 CBC Calendar of Events (continued)

May 2-4 – CBC Spring Meeting – Southern Pines, NC

May 16-18 – Mississippi Kite, Kentucky Warbler, Swainson's Warbler and more on this trip to **Howell Woods Learning Center**, Four Oaks, NC. Stay tuned for details!

July 11-19 – Maine - Ventures with Simon Thompson

November – Peru – Ventures with Simon Thompson

Continue to check future newsletters and the CBC website for additional details and trips!

CBC 2007 Fall Meeting in Santee, SC a Success!

The Santee fall meeting has come and gone, and I hope you were there to enjoy the fellowship, great weather, and above all... some great birding!

Approximately 115 participants enjoyed a variety of field trips to view resident South Carolina specialties and fall migrants. From shorebirds to raptors, warblers to thrushes, chances are they were among the 161 species tallied. Field trips visited locations including the Orangeburg Sod Farms, Santee NWR, and Congaree National Park. Some of the more exciting avian finds included Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Peregrine Falcon, Purple Gallinule, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Cave Swallow, and Blue-winged Warbler.



Cattle Egret
Bruce Smithson

Evening events included a presentation by Laurel Barnhill, bird conservation coordinator with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, and Jamie Rotenberg, from UNC-Wilmington, on the work of the Painted Bunting Observation Team in the Carolinas, a project intended to learn more about the distribution and biology of the beautiful multi-colored buntings.

The following night attendees enjoyed a presentation by John Cely on a wonderful birding trip to South America that netted 419 species for the trip list. Saturday also featured a "birder's buffet" allowing participants to mingle and exchange stories over a delicious dinner.

Special thanks to meeting organizer Marion Clark, with invaluable assistance from Dana Harris, Pru Williams and Lena Gallitano, and all the field trip leaders, for making this a great meeting.

Although the fun is over for the Santee meeting, you can be a part of the CBC's next seasonal meetings held in Georgetown, SC and Southern Pines, NC. Hope to see you there!

CBC Bonus Field Trip Registration Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening phone _____ Email _____

I am enclosing \$ _____ for the following:

Bonus Field Trip

Brunswick County Woodpeckers _____ x \$20 = \$ _____

Club policy requires all field trip participants to comply with the field trip leader's assessment and requests concerning the physical ability of each participant to make or complete the trip.

I release and discharge (and will not make a claim against) Carolina Bird Club for injury, death, or property damage arising from my participation at this meeting and/or Club field trips. This release of liability is entered into on behalf of all members of my family, including all minors accompanying me. I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of any such minors and that I am over 18 years of age.

Signature _____ Date _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send to: CBC, 353 Montabello, Bloomingdale, IL 60108

☐ Please update my address or other contact information as listed above

CBC Enjoys Ridge Junction

Lori Owenby

We had a beautiful morning Wednesday, September 12, 2007 for the Carolina Bird Club's Bonus Field Trip to Ridge Junction, an overlook at the base of Mt. Mitchell on the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina. There were literally hundreds of birds moving through the gap this morning; most just quickly passing through on their way south. We were treated to many good looks though, and some were awesomely close and quite cooperative. The hummingbirds were very amusing as they breezed past us all sitting in our chairs. We should have counted them as there had to have been at least fifty come by after the sun came up a little. There just seemed to be an endless stream of them—a few stopping to inspect the red tail lights of some of the vehicles! And the Tennessee Warblers, well, they were just trash birds! It seemed like for every ten birds we got our binoculars on, eight of them were Tennessees! I think everyone saw at least two dozen if not more.

We had a “first” at the overlook! A Great Blue Heron, looking very out of place, gracefully flew just over our heads heading due east. We also had Red Crossbills fly over. It sounded like at least two birds. We tried to spish them down, which seems to work well at this location, but no luck! Other highlights included four vireo species, including Philadelphia and Yellow-throated, and fourteen warbler species—including Nashville and Orange-crowned. It was a very memorable morning to say the least. We had 45 species in all. Not bad for walking and sitting on about half an acre of God's country!

Feeder Antics

Susan Pulsipher

Have you noticed how cardinals are the last bird at the feeder every evening? Long after other birds have stopped coming the cardinals are still arriving for an early evening snack. Is that one of the reasons for their success? Then there is the White-breasted Nuthatch who appears to have a Hobbit's predilection for frequent meal times and all of those meal times are at the sunflower feeder. The bird calls as he approaches via the nearby dogwood trees. That call is so distinctive you always know when the bird is around. We assume it is a single bird as we only see one at a time. Two winters ago there were two of them that always came together. Half-way through the winter only one was arriving. A family tragedy perhaps, and no replacement mate has come on the scene.

This nuthatch can be very cautious, hanging out on the roof of the feeder while he assesses when to make a move. He's not picky when he does go down to the feeding perch. Once a seed is obtained he flies up to the nearby dogwood trunk and proceeds to pound, peck and eat the bounty.

Now the Brown-headed Nuthatches rarely hesitate about moving in to the feeder perch. They approach via the dogwood trees. These birds have little fear of

the other species that may be present. They quickly fit their tiny bodies into an available spot, grab a seed and head for the high hills or in this case the pine trees that are some distance from the feeder. No eating in the immediate vicinity for the Brown-headed Nuthatches. Contrast their behavior with that of the titmice and chickadees. The latter birds take their seed up to a nearby dogwood branch for appropriate pounding and nibbling, then back down for a second, and a third.

There were antics at a window hummingbird feeder this year. We only put up the one feeder and for whatever reason we appeared to have far more hummers visible than in previous years. Perhaps the window location made it harder for a male to guard against all comers, though this seems unlikely. One guard who was successful was a local hornet. A hummer would approach and the hornet would appear and fly towards the hummer. The hummer backed off and moved left or right with the hornet matching the moves. I never saw a hummer call the hornet's bluff, if it was a bluff. A single hummer would make umpteen attempts at the feeder only to back away every time when the hornet moved forward. We took pity on one hummer and oh so carefully 'did in' the offending defending hornet.



Periodicals Postage Paid
at Bloomington, IL 60108
and additional mailing
offices

Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
6325 Falls of the Neuse Road,
STE 9 PMB 150, Raleigh, NC
27615



000009*000001*****MIXED ADC 270
142 0 /3000
SMITHSONIAN LIBRARIES
NHB 25-MRC 154
BOX 37012/SERIALS
WASHINGTON DC 20013

Upcoming CBC Meetings

Southern Pines, NC May 2-4, 2008
Carolina Beach/Ft. Fisher, NC Fall 2008



CBC Board Members

President, Steve Patterson
Lancaster, SC, 803-667-8199
SCBirder@aol.com

Vice-Presidents

Marion Clark, Lexington, SC
John Ennis, Leland, NC
Taylor Piephoff, Charlotte, NC

Secretary

Pru Williams, Hope Mills, NC

Treasurer

Bruce Smithson, Wilmington, NC

NC Members-at-Large

Lena Gallitano, Raleigh
Dwayne Martin, Hickory
Lucy Quintilliano, Charlotte
Ed Toone, Wilmington

SC Members-at-Large

Linda Kolb, Seneca
Dr. J. Drew Lanham, Clemson

Immediate Past President, Stephen Harris, Bloomington, IL

Editor of *The Chat*, Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC

Website Editor, Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC

Editor of *CBC Newsletter*, Steven Shultz

4201 Sentimental Lane, Apex, NC 27539

919-779-2826, sshultz@nc.rr.com

Submission deadlines are due the 1st of January, March, May,
July, September, and November.

Headquarters Secretary, Dana Harris, Bloomington, IL

630-453-8270, srharris@mindspring.com

Rare Bird Alert: 704-332-BIRD

CBC Website: www.carolinabirdclub.org

The *CBC Newsletter* is published bimonthly by Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Founded in 1937 the membership is open to anyone interested in birds, natural history, and conservation. Current dues are: Individual & non-profit, \$20; Associate (in household with individual), \$5; Student, \$15; Patron, \$50 and up; Sustaining & businesses, \$25; Life, \$400; Associate Life (in household with Life Member), \$100 (both Life memberships can be paid in four annual installments).

Membership dues of \$20 include \$4 for a subscription to *CBC Newsletter* and \$5 for a subscription to *The Chat*. Cost for CBC bird checklists, including postage: 10@ \$2.50, 25@ \$6, 50@ \$11.75, 75@ \$17.75, and 100@ \$23.50. Submit application for membership, change of address, and payment for checklists to: CBC Headquarters Secretary, 6325 Falls of the Neuse Road, STE 9 PMB 150, Raleigh, NC 27615